

2 December 1947

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MEMORANDUM FOR 

SUBJECT: Clearance of CIA Estimates with the Departmental Intelligence Organizations

1. In the main, the clearance of a CIA estimate with the departmental intelligence organizations is obtained in two distinct operations: The informal clearance which is the natural consequence of frequent contacts between the analyst preparing the estimate and his confreres in the departmental intelligence organizations; and the formal clearance, the result of which is the receipt of a written concurrence or dissent.

2. Concurrences of the Departments of State and the Army are almost invariably accompanied by extensive comments; the Departments of the Navy and the Air Forces usually concur without comment.

3. A deadline for the receipt of concurrence or dissent is set at one week. Notification by telephone of concurrence or dissent is usually received on the deadline date, after which another week is needed to receive and incorporate any comments accompanying concurrences. When a dissent is forthcoming, the additional efforts of representatives of CIA and the dissenting organization plus the additional internal clearance required by the dissenting organization apparently makes impossible the receipt of a dissent for publication in any reasonable time. (Average time exceeds one month.)

4. Regarding the value of coordination, it is undoubtedly true that a CIA estimate is more authoritative when it can be said of it that it has been concurred in by State, Army, Navy and Air Forces. Such coordination is in fact a fulfillment, in part, of the CIA mission. But the value of the coordination process is largely derived at the stage where that coordination is informal -- during the preparation of the paper, rather than after its completion.

5. Though there are rare exceptions, it can generally be stated that the results of the process of formal coordination, where it has been necessary to await the preparation of a dissent in particular, do not appear to justify the protracted delays in the publication of a paper. These delays cannot but serve to deprive the estimate of a measure, and sometimes a very considerable measure, of its timeliness.

DEC 2 1947
62-5

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

6. Furthermore, it can be nothing but demoralizing to CIA personnel responsible for the preparation of a report to be given a few days in which to prepare it and then to nurse the report along through a laborious process of hickering over details in addition to putting up with the delays attending the mechanics of physically preparing the report for dissemination.

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